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ABSTRACT

A background for discussion of curriculum reform and some concrete examples of what is occurring in parts of the United States are presented. The current debate over the undergraduate curriculum is reviewed, summarizing the criticisms and key recommendations of the most influential recent reports. State and institutional responses to these reports are reviewed, and key issues for faculty are discussed. Six sections deal with the following topics: context of the current debate; the critiques (i.e., there is no shared vision or purpose, there is poor intellectual integration, there is inadequate depth, and there is not enough attention paid to methods and styles of inquiry); causes of current problems (competition for students, new institutional priorities, and weaker standards); proposed reforms (especially as contained in the Association of American Colleges and National Institute of Education reports); institutional and state responses; and issues for faculty (establishing curriculum priorities, protecting professional prerogatives, reassessing faculty reward systems, and ensuring adequate support for faculty). Seven conclusions include the following: faculty should insist on a primary role in curricular reform; faculty should work to see that good teaching is encouraged, recognized, and rewarded; and faculty should be vigilant in protecting the academic freedom of their colleagues. Two appendices discuss (1) the components of the undergraduate curriculum and (2) the NEA Policy Statement on Curricular Reform. Suggestions on further reading are provided, including the Carnegie Foundation "Trilogy" on the curriculum, the reform reports, including Lynne Cheney's Humanities in America (1988) and a response to Cheney published by the American Council of Learned Societies. (SM)

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THE CURRENT DEBATE AND ISSUES FOR FACULTY

Curriculum Reform in Higher Education

HE 022 769

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Preface

In 1987, NEA published a series of statements on issues arising from the current movement to reform higher education. One of these statements addressed the reform of curriculum in American colleges and universities. It described the proper relationship of the curriculum to faculty and students as:

> *No effort at (educational) reform can succeed without adequate support for the faculty who have primary responsibility for the curriculum, nor can it succeed unless it addresses the needs of a diverse student population.*[1]

NEA is deeply committed to curricula that accommodate the cultural and ethnic diversity of students in American institutions of higher learning. The 1987 statement warned that some current attempts to return to a "traditional" course of study may be actually be efforts to undercut faculty control, equal access to quality education for all students, and multicultural understanding. NEA does not consider these goals incompatible with in-depth study, critical thinking, academic discipline, a coherent course of study, and a good foundation in "the basics."

Within states, NEA proposed that curriculum reform at one large institution, such as a state university, may affect nearby institutions, such as community colleges. Whenever possible, therefore, the process of large-scale curricular reform at such larger institutions might well involve consultation with faculty representatives from other affected institutions.

The study that follows was proposed by the NEA Advisory Group on Reform Issues in Higher Education and funded by the NEA Instructional and Professional Development division. The material was gathered by a private consulting firm, edited by NEA staff in Affiliate Services and Communications, and reviewed by the NEA Standing Committee on Higher Education.

As part of the series, "To Promote Academic Justice and Excellence," this booklet offers background for a discussion of curriculum reform and some concrete examples of what is occurring in parts of the country. This publication is not intended as a statement on, or the elaboration of, organizational principles or policy. Readers who have comments about this and other NEA publications are encouraged to write: The Office of Higher Education, National Education Association, 1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Mary Hatwood Futrell, President

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Introduction

The reform movement has come to higher education. In the early 1980s, serious questions were raised about the quality of the nation's K–12 public schools. The United States was characterized as a "nation at risk" due to deteriorating educational standards. By mid-decade the reform spotlight widened to include postsecondary institutions. A flood of reports, studies, books, and articles called for significant improvements in the quality of undergraduate education in American colleges and universities. A wide panoply of commissions, foundations, associations, institutes, government agencies, and individuals scrutinized higher education institutions.

Some studies had a relatively limited focus, such as the education of physicians, or teachers, or particular minority groups. Others treated special issues such as high school-college articulation, college and university leadership, science education, or college governance. But the most influential reports are broadly concerned with the quality of undergraduate education. They discuss the purposes of a college education, critique current practices, and offer numerous recommendations. The recommendations concentrate on curriculum and the course of study, teaching, the treatment of students, and accountability. The reports view curriculum reform, as the "battlefield at the heart of the institution."[2]

This booklet reviews the current debate over the undergraduate curriculum. It summarizes the criticisms and key recommendations of the most influential recent reports. Finally, it reviews state and institutional responses to these reports, and discusses key issues for faculty.

Although the curricular reform movement has recently moved into the area of undergraduate professional and vocational education,[3] this paper is largely confined to curriculum issues in the liberal arts. We of course recognize that curriculum reform has become a significant issue at two-year colleges. Issues of student and curricular diversity, quality, and mission are often even more salient at two-year colleges than they are at four-year institutions. Further, the recent emphasis on articulation and transfer between two-year and four-year liberal arts colleges has sharpened the discussions at two-year colleges. Much of what is said below applies to two-year colleges. However, the governance structure and the broader missions of many two-year colleges often differ from four-year colleges to such an extent that curricular questions at these colleges merit separate attention.[4]

By the turn of the century, American colleges and universities offered a wide variety of subjects, courses, programs, and degrees. To accommodate increasingly variant interests, American colleges and universities resorted to the "elective system." This system permitted students to choose among increased course offerings, at the cost of the number of courses required of all students. After World War I, some educators called for increased curricular commonality, and something of a counter trend set in. The new required courses that were introduced at this time often concentrated on the cultural heritage of Western civilization. Columbia introduced the most famous of these courses, its "Contemporary Civilization" sequence, in 1919.

Forty years into the twentieth century more courses and more specialties had been added as knowledge expanded and the economy modernized. But colleges and universities, which still served only a small proportion of the age cohort, made relatively minor curricular adjustments. They often discriminated against minorities (Jews, Blacks, women) in both admission and in student social life. Poorer students, even if admitted, often found campus life inhospitable.[5]

By 1980, this picture had dramatically changed. Spectacular increases in enrollment, the development of new relationships between higher education, the federal government, and the corporate world, and the admission to colleges and universities of many students who would previously have been excluded—particularly women, ethnic minorities, and the poor—have permanently altered the face of American higher education.

The first wave of new enrollees were returning World War II veterans—more than two million students attended college under the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (the "G.I. Bill of Rights"). By 1948, the pre-war college enrollment of 1.5 million had grown 60 percent to 2.4 million. Enrollment reached 7.9 million by 1970 as the post-war baby boom reached the campuses. It continued to climb to more than 12 million (nearly 5 million at two-year colleges) by 1985. More than 1,500 new colleges (about half of them two-year schools) were built since 1946 to accommodate the demand. Between 1960 and 1970 alone, 535 new campuses and 270,000 new faculty positions were created. Public colleges, which in 1940 enrolled slightly more than half of all college students, now enroll about 80 percent. The number of students who attend universities with more than 10,000 matriculants has more than tripled. Only recently have projections shown potential decreases ahead in undergraduate and graduate enrollments. To this point, however, these predicted decreases have not occurred.

The federal government heavily financed this extraordinary growth in student enrollment. The G.I. Bill was followed by the Sputnik-inspired National Defense Education Act of 1958. NDEA supported strengthening undergraduate mathematics and science curricula. Assistance to colleges and students expanded under the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. This assistance culminated in the Higher Education Act of 1965, which provided the first direct grants to undergraduates. Federal spending for colleges and students continued to grow until the early 1980s, when it leveled off sharply under the first Reagan administration.

The federal role was not limited to institutional and student support. World War II brought federal research dollars, and the beginnings of a government-university-industry relationship that assured the permanence of universities as centers for basic and applied research. Between 1953 and 1980, expenditures for organized research and development at American universities climbed from $300 million (constant 1967 dollars) to over $2 billion, mostly from federal support (particularly for military and defense-related work).

The dramatic expansion of American higher education also resulted from a substantial change in the idea of who should go to college. The success of the veterans who attended under the G.I. Bill helped to create the idea that college education should not be confined to a small elite. Prestigious government commissions deemed higher education a source of equal social and economic opportunity.[6] The civil rights movement alerted policymakers to the barriers to educational opportunity that many Americans still confronted. Infusions of federal aid, state and federal legislation, and major changes in institutional policies on access all accelerated the trend towards inclusiveness. Student rebels in the 1960s emphasized access in their "demands." They also insisted on "relevant" curricular changes to meet the needs of newly admitted students and of a society that confronted multiple social problems. What would have been a novel idea in 1940 is a commonplace today—that higher education "should be available to all qualified persons regardless of family income, sex, ethnic origin, religion, or handicap."[7] The result has been unprecedented numerical growth, and greater diversity—in women, ethnic minorities, older students, the poor, the handicapped—the "nontraditional" students. These "new students" have brought with them a broad range of interests and skills.

Context of the Current Debate

Today's undergraduate curriculum is astonishingly broad and diverse. Large research universities and state colleges commonly offer thousands of different courses to undergraduates; their catalogs are as thick as metropolitan phone directories. Hundreds of different baccalaureate degrees are available, often with further specialization within the degree area. Curriculum diversity on this scale, however, is a relatively recent development.

The "classical" undergraduate curriculum contained heavy doses of Greek, Latin, and mathematics—subjects designed to *discipline* the mind. Until the turn of the century, curricular reform was often couched in terms of its effect on mental discipline: English, history, the social sciences, and the natural and physical sciences should be studied not only for content, but for their ability to offer mental discipline as did classical subjects. The introduction of new courses arose from changes in European scholarship which American colleges wished to emulate, as well as from demands for more practical offerings than were offered by many colleges.

Often, practical demands were promoted by demographic changes. In the late 19th century, the percentage of the age cohort that attended college increased. Colleges devised increasingly specialized curricula to accommodate these students. These curricula reflected both new knowledge in the sciences and the rapid proliferation of new occupations that accompanied industrialization. Growth in the number of academics earning the Ph.D. further strengthened the tendency towards specialization.

The National Education Association played a key role in conceptualizing and implementing the new liberal arts curricula. Its Committee of Ten (1894) drew upon the talents of college professors and secondary school teachers to reform the high school curriculum. The Committee recommended the introduction of subjects such as English, history, modern language, and science into the many high schools that did not offer these subjects. It also specified the topics that should be covered in each subject. Changes in the college curriculum followed rapidly. High school graduates who presented English, history, and science for entrance to college often wished to pursue these subjects on the college level. That provided needed leverage to collegiate curriculum reformers who wished to introduce these subjects and to diminish the centrality of Latin, Greek, and mathematics.

These changes have not been trouble-free. The transformation from an elite to a mass system of higher education, and the opening of the "ivory tower" to federal and corporate research priorities, was accompanied by a vast expansion of the curriculum, and a shift in student course enrollment from traditional arts and sciences toward career preparation. Critics, noting the nature and direction of these changes, assert that American colleges and universities have not maintained a clear sense of purpose in dealing with the new students, new monies, and new values that marked the recent growth of higher education.

The Critiques

There is a long national tradition of examination, appraisal, and reappraisal of the quality of American higher education. Indeed, calls for reform were published several decades before the Civil War.[8] Both educational reformers and educational conservatives have criticized the curricular status quo; the former cite unresponsiveness to change in the body of knowledge and in the composition of the student body; the latter cite excessive responsiveness to those changes.

The current critiques focus on undergraduate education. They have stimulated a broad debate on directions and priorities.[9] Among the sponsors of these critiques: the National Institute of Education (NIE),[10] the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Newman, Boyer),[11] the Association of American Colleges (AAC),[12] the National Endowment for the Humanities (Bennett),[13] and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (Bell).[14] In 1987, Professors Allan Bloom (University of Chicago), and E.D. Hirsch, Jr. (University of Virginia) published their own influential studies.[15] These and other reports make the following criticisms of the undergraduate curriculum:

- *There is no shared vision or purpose.* Critics believe that confusion over the mission and purpose of the undergraduate curriculum results in inadequate criteria for shaping students' courses of study. A "marketplace" or "cafeteria" approach substitutes for a coherent philosophy of curriculum. Under this approach, students shop for whatever appeals to them, without essential guidance or structure. General education course requirements "lack a rationale and cohesion or, even worse, are almost lacking altogether. Electives are being used to fatten majors and diminish breadth. It is as if no one cared, so long as the store stays open."[16] Courses are offered in response to demand, and the curriculum is determined by its presumed appeal to large numbers of students. [Appendix 1 summarizes the purposes of the general education, major, and elective components of the undergraduate curriculum as most higher education institutions define them.]

- *Liberal education has been neglected.* Some reports charge that too many students have been allowed to select courses of study that concentrate on professional/technical subjects. These students are not adequately exposed to history, literature, art, philosophy, languages, basic sciences, and other components of a liberal college education, both traditional and contemporary. States the NIE report:

  > *Students have abandoned some of the traditional arts and sciences fields in large numbers. Just since 1977, the proportion of entering freshmen intending to major in the physical sciences has declined by 13 percent; in the humanities by 17 percent; in the social sciences by 19 percent; and in the biological sciences by fully 21 percent.*

  Another study claims that "A student can obtain a bachelor's degree from 75 percent of all American colleges and universities without having studied European history, from 72 percent without having studied American literature or history, and from 86 percent without having studied the civilizations of classical Greece and Rome."[17] Students who avoid these subjects, critics fear, do not develop the knowledge and understanding that society now expects of college graduates.

  One reason for this neglect, it is charged, is that students devote too much time to their major—time not spent in pursuing general education courses. This is particularly true of students in technical, professional, and vocational majors. The NIE report notes:

  > *The guidelines of one professional accrediting association confine one-half to two-thirds of a student's baccalaureate program to courses in two areas. Another association prescribes approximately 70 percent of a student's total program and confines that percentage wholly to two subject areas. And according to the standards of yet another association, the bachelor's degree program should involve as much as 80 percent of a student's work in the professional field.*

- *There is poor intellectual integration.* Too few students have the opportunity to integrate knowledge from different disciplines. Many students train for specific jobs by taking narrow courses. They have no opportunity to grasp the interrelationship of knowledge from different fields, or to synthesize information and ideas. At one college, Boyer notes, students must complete only one course in English, one in mathematics, and one semester in foreign language. Beyond that, "students select 30 units of credit from literally

dozens of other courses spread among the humanities, natural sciences and social science divisions." As a result, "students wander from one narrow department requirement to another never discovering connections, never seeing the whole."

- *There is inadequate depth.* Not only is the undergraduate courses of study disjointed, so even is the major. Critics contend that the undergraduate major has become "little more than a gathering of courses in one department,"[18] without coherence, structure, or adequate depth of inquiry in a given subject area. There are estimated to be over 6,000 majors in colleges across the country.[19] New career-oriented and specialized majors, are frequently created by subdividing traditional majors. Boyer describes a university that offered one major in business administration in 1965. By 1985, the offerings expanded to *sixteen* business-related majors. Cumulative exposure to more subject matter often substitutes for a planned sequence of courses of increasing sophistication. Boyer writes of one college:

  > ***It is difficult to believe that this laundry list of courses represents a legitimate discipline. Specialized information is being imparted without an intellectual framework in which to place it. Course descriptions speak only of 'skills'—the sort of statement one finds in trade school pamphlets and brochures. Nowhere is the student encouraged to view the specialty in larger context.***

- *There is not enough attention paid to methods and styles of inquiry.* Some critics assert that students are too often held responsible only for the content of the curriculum. These students receive inadequate help with the development of their analytic capacities. Critics charge that the American college curriculum "offers too much knowledge with too little attention to how that knowledge has been created and what methods and styles of inquiry have led to its creation."[20] They conclude that the mission of the curriculum should not be restricted to imparting knowledge. The curriculum should also help students to acquire analytic, problem solving, and communication skills.

Causes of Current Problems

Critics of the undergraduate curriculum trace current problems to three changes in American higher education:

- *Competition for students.* Critics attribute the move toward the "marketplace" curriculum, and the decline of general education and liberal arts studies to institutional policies designed to attract and retain vast numbers of "new students." As the job market for college graduates weakened in the 1970s, students turned increasingly toward professional and technical studies at the expense of general education. Institutional and faculty vitality often required student enrollment growth, since enrollment-based formulas largely determined state appropriations. Colleges and universities intensified competition for enrollments as demographic predictions become pessimistic.

  Most institutions are in the position of almost immediate dependence upon the number of students for their financial sustenance; they live or die according to their ability to attract and retain students. . . . Under these conditions, the power of [institutions] to decide on curricula, to establish standards, and to deploy resources . . . was eroded. Institutional policy came to be dictated by whatever attracts and holds students, and educational policy making was largely shifted to the market for students away from. . .the professional judgments of educators.[21]

  This resulted, asserts one critic, in the creation of:

  A new and commanding [student] authority over the course of study. The interests of students. . .have increasingly helped to shape what has been taught, and how. What is now going on is almost anything. . .in the name of the bachelor's degree. . .with a fear of diminishing numbers, drift has taken over [and] a survival ethic encourages. . .a diminished vision.[22]

- *New Institutional Priorities.* The expansion of federal, state, and corporate support for academic research shifted in priorities at many universities, toward research and away from teaching. Faculty aspirations "came to be focused increasingly on achievements in research and scholarship within their specialties. . .[and they were] encouraged. . .by a reward system that conferred the highest status and the most generous compensation on those who were outstanding achievers in research and scholarship."[23] As undergraduate enrollments increased, so did graduate school attendance.

The supply of trained scholars exceeded demand when undergraduate enrollment growth eventually slowed down. As a result of this strong buyers' market:

> *Campus after campus has been moving aggressively to upgrade the importance of scholarly productivity as a criterion for academic personnel decisions [resulting in] a veritable surge toward research [even at] institutions where research had previously been a low priority and where effective teaching had long been the dominant criterion by which faculty were hired and promoted.*[24]

Analysts find considerable tension on most campuses over the priorities of teaching and research. "Faculty members like to teach and yet the American professoriate has been profoundly shaped by the conviction that research is the cornerstone of the profession."[25] Critics of the curriculum believe this emphasis on research reinforces narrow specialization in the undergraduate course of study:

> *Concentration was the bread and butter of the vast majority of the professors, the style they knew and approved, the measure of departmental strength and popularity. [When] breadth, distribution, and general education. . .collided with the interests of department and the major field, only occasionally did the general prevail over the special.*[26]

In this "transformation of the professors from teachers. . .to professionals. . .with an allegiance to academic disciplines stronger than their commitment to teaching," the critics argue, the faculty abandoned responsibility for "the curriculum as a whole [and for] the course of study as it is experienced by students."[27]

- *Weaker standards.* Colleges and universities, critics charge, adapted their curricula to accommodate the needs of "nontraditional" students with a wide range of preparation and skills, and diverse interests and concerns.[28] In addition, the academic preparation of the "average" college student declined markedly over last two decades. Between 1964 and 1982, "student performance on 11 of 15 major Subject Area Tests of the Graduate Record Examinations declined. . ."[29] Critics argued that many colleges and universities weakened the quality of their curricula in order to accommodate students who are less well prepared than preceding generations of college students. Colleges are also charged with introducing curricula for nontraditional students that compromised traditional standards. Such curricula also invited students to neglect essential courses in the liberal arts, or appropriate study in depth:

The tension between democratic values and the effort to maintain standards for an undergraduate education can be creative, but too often numbers and political considerations have prevailed over quality and rationality in shaping the undergraduate course of study.[30]

These concerns about the quality of undergraduate education received added urgency by uneasiness over the nation's declining economic power, and the "need to be more effective in an economy that for the first time is truly international.... At stake is the fundamental issue of the place of the United States in the world, whether it will define itself as a country moving ahead or as a country drifting into a lesser role."[31]

Proposed Reforms

Curricular reformers traditionally make recommendations along three axes:

- the *absolute* number of courses offered by a college may be increased or decreased. Thus, curricular reform that emphasizes greater specialization usually favors increased numbers of course offerings. In contrast, reforms that emphasize greater commonality often advocate a reduction in offerings.
- the number of *required* courses may be increased or decreased. The current reformers often advocate imposition of greater numbers of required courses or of required subjects. Conversely, they decry what they consider to be an excessive number of elective choices open to the student.
- the *breadth* of the curriculum may be adjusted. Most current reformers urge an increase of breadth, and a concomitant reduction in specialized courses.

Twenty years ago, many reformers advocated increasing the number of courses to take into account the expansion of knowledge, more electives to give students the freedom to select areas of interest, and greater depth to permit students to master at least one field of knowledge while in college. In contrast, contemporary reformers advocate fewer courses, fewer electives, and greater breadth. These dimensions are really end points on a continuum: the number of courses offered may be increased slightly or greatly, for example.[32]

Here is a brief summary of recommendations from reform proposals designed to overcome the fragmentation and the specialization that critics identify within the college curriculum.

- *The AAC report:* Rather than focusing on lower division/upper division courses or general education per se, the AAC report emphasizes that students should "learn how to learn." It states:

> *We* do not *believe that the road to a coherent undergraduate education can be constructed from a set of required subjects or disciplines. We* do *believe that there are methods and processes, modes of success to understanding and judgment, that should inform all study.*

Other reformers share this view. Boyer favors an "integrated core" approach to curriculum in which basic subject areas and their interconnections would be essential to all undergraduate education. The AAC report recommends that

colleges and universities develop a required curriculum that includes nine essential experiences:

- Inquiry, abstract logical thinking, critical analysis;
- Literacy: writing, reading, speaking, listening;
- Understanding numerical data;
- Historical consciousness;
- Science—its nature, methods, reliability and limitations;
- Values;
- Appreciation and experience of the fine and performing arts;
- International and multicultural experiences;
- Study in depth.

Some reformers call for education that encourages creativity and risk-taking. Such an education would prepare students for entrepreneurial activity and civic involvement. Frank Newman, president of the Education Commission of the States, for example, defines creativity as, "the ability to create new concepts, to integrate differing forms of knowledge and experience in order to reach new understandings, and to be receptive to change."

- *The NIE report:* This report calls for the expansion of liberal education requirements. It recommends that "all bachelor's degree recipients should have at least two full years of liberal education." It also warns that "in most professional fields, this will require extending undergraduate programs beyond the usual four years." The report recommends that in preparation for the future and for adaption to change, students should be taught to think critically, to analyze and synthesize information, and to master language and communication skills.

The Boyer and AAC reports also suggest a redefinition of the major or study in depth. Boyer believes an *enriched major* will encourage students

> *. . .not only to explore a field in depth, but also to help them put their field of special study in perspective. The major, as it is enriched, will respond to three essential questions: What is the history and tradition of the field to be examined? What are the social and economic implications to be understood? What are the ethnical and moral issues to be confronted?*

Most reformers agree that breadth and depth requirements should be *integrated* into a curriculum that includes *both* liberal and useful arts. The reports argue that the *totality* of the undergraduate experience should develop and foster the interrelationship between the general and the special, between liberal learning and vocational skills.

Thus, most critics conclude that undergraduate education should be redefined, restructured, and strengthened to integrate knowledge between disciplines; prepare students for citizenship in the community, nation, and the world, and educate them for lifelong learning and work. Reformers propose a reexamination of individual courses and the mix of courses to ensure the inclusion of suggested content areas and interdisciplinary approaches. They exhort institutions to require all students, including vocational, technical, professional, and business majors, to take substantial coursework from the liberal arts/general education curriculum. Reformers also call for the redefinition of the undergraduate major to assure intellectual content and lifelong relevance to students.

Institutional and State Responses

When the current spate of curricular critiques began to appear in 1984, many colleges had already reviewed or revised their curricula. An 1984 American Council on Education survey of four-year institutions found that one-third of the respondents recently completed such a review and over half had reviews under way. ACE noted that such reviews usually led to a stiffening of general education requirements and more emphasis on student competencies and skills. Most institutions also reported a recent or planned increase in course requirements.[33]

Boyer's own 1984 survey confirmed this renewed interest in general education, but he remained skeptical. The survey, he said, "did not find many new ideas. Mainly colleges are dusting off their old distribution requirements. The debate about general education has become more intense but not more creative."[34]

By mid-1988, 9 out of 10 colleges reported that they had implemented significant curriculum changes. An ACE survey listed the most common changes:

- Greater emphasis on improving the writing skills of students.
- New general education requirements.
- Greater emphasis on analytical or critical thinking
- Greater emphasis on the freshman year
- New ways to assess student progress and learning.

Colleges and universities, concluded the ACE report, appear to have heeded many of the recommendations found in the recent calls for change. "About 7 in 10 administrators reported that, compared to 1980, their institutions now have 'increased coherence' in general education. In addition, about 6 in 10 administrators reported that the curriculum now include 'more rigorous standards' for graduation."[35]

State-level pressures also encouraged undergraduate curriculum reform. A 1985 survey conducted by the Education Commission of the States found reform initiatives underway in all fifty states and the District of Columbia. These initiatives ranged from incentive funding (such as competitive grant programs) for undergraduate education (twelve states) to systemwide reviews or comprehensive studies of higher education (eleven states). While "the intensity of these concerns varies from state to state," ECS concluded, "there is little doubt that they will be on the political agenda in most states for at least the next few years."[36]

Some states directly addressed the undergraduate curriculum and course of study. Through their state boards or through state-level advisory commissions, Arkansas, Florida, Michigan, Montana, Nebraska, New York, Oregon, and Texas recommended, or asked their institutions of higher education to develop, a core curriculum or a minimum set of undergraduate general education requirements. Other states, acting through their legislatures or state boards, specified general education or core curriculum requirements, or directed their institutions to develop and implement such requirements.

Issues for Faculty

The call for curricular reform in undergraduate education has not posed new issues for faculty. Rather it has made four ongoing issues more salient.

- *Establishing curriculum priorities.* Are the criticisms offered by the reform reports accurate? Are their recommendations sound? The ACE and ECS surveys show that the reports stimulated campus debate on the goals of undergraduate education, and spurred many institutional and state-level efforts to strengthen the curriculum and course of study. But while there may be widespread agreement that the need to rationalize and strengthen the curriculum, some educators believe that the curriculum should go beyond the traditional model of liberal education that is emphasized by some reformers. These scholars complain that

> *What is common to the majority of these reports is that the alternate present they envisage for education turns out to be the past...that beyond one or two tokens appears to lack women, Jews, Byzantines, and Muslims, let alone...blacks or Amerindians. There is no sense that one of the challenges and resources of higher education after World War II has been the shattering of liberal education as a finishing school and the acceptance of responsibility for diversity.*[37]

As for curriculum content, these writers argue that "at least in the humanities and social sciences...the human and social norms embodied in the familiar list of Great Books were profoundly incomplete."[38] They point out that

> *the traditional goals of liberal education have lost their rationale, not just because of wayward students, irresponsible faculty, and bottom-line administrators, but because the world in which we live has changed . . . it is simply no longer possible to assume that there is a single self-evident canon of humanistic thought and texts that can be restored at the heart of the curriculum.*[39]

Instead, they suggest that undergraduate education embrace both the traditional curriculum and broader perspectives that include women, ethic minorities, and Third World cultures:

> *The fundamental error here is the belief that we must make a choice—either we return to the classics...or we fall into an alphabet soup of pluralistic ideology, a mishmash of special-interest scholarship. The reality we confront is more*

complex, and vastly more exciting: a whole series of disciplines enriched and expanded by new scholarship, which enhances and deepens our understanding of the classics even as it opens perspectives hitherto closed to us.[40]

Constant faculty concern about curricular issues is often fueled by external critiques of the sort that have appeared in the past few years. Many faculty members, for example, wrote rejoinders to Robert Hutchins's "Great Books" proposal. In the 1960s, faculty members addressed questions raised about the relevance of the traditional curriculum. Increased student vocationalism and diversity, and research pressure spurred faculty discussions in the 1970s and 1980s. Indeed, the two most quoted contributions to the debate were written by faculty members: those by Allan Bloom and E.D. Hirsch, Jr. The current criticism of undergraduate education added to the growing pressure on faculty to review curriculum priorities and take a fresh look at these issues.

In many cases, faculty members concluded that the curriculum needs to be redesigned to meet the needs of a diverse, heterogeneous student body. Many students need help in developing or sharpening college-level skills. Else, they will suffer academically and are likely to drop out of college. Most students place education for employment ahead of other values, and demand opportunities for specialization in employment-related skills. Finally, the world into which these students will graduate is changing profoundly. Graduates are entering a world of global interrelationships in which the American economy and American security are linked to the economies and political fortunes of nations throughout the world.

Curriculum reform would have to balance traditional goals with these new realities. This means balancing liberal education with education for employment; general education with specialization; education in Western traditions with more global perspectives; rigorous standards with the need for remedial programs. In realigning curriculum priorities, faculty will decide on the scope and nature of required core courses, and re-examine the relationship of curriculum to the delivery of instruction. Thus, small group and self-paced instruction may benefit from a curriculum that is segmented into small modules rather than into quarter or semester schedules. Some faculties may reassess the extent to which the curriculum—particularly in the applied sciences and technical specialities—should reflect the strong defense industry orientation of U.S. research and development efforts.

- *Protecting professional prerogatives.* The reform reports agree that "the responsibility for defining specific standards of content and levels of student performance and college-level learning in undergraduate education must fall on the academic institutions themselves, or those standards will have no credibility."[41]

Most reports recommend that college presidents and deans set reform agendas, establish priorities, and support faculty reassessments of the curriculum. At the same time, most reports assume that faculty will play the central role in curriculum decisions, for example through faculty senates,[42] or through curriculum committees that will "revive the responsibility of the faculty *as a whole* for the curriculum *as a whole*."[43]

But not all states have left these decisions to their colleges and universities. State-level agencies have made specific curriculum recommendations to their public postsecondary institutions, thereby shaping the agenda for faculty deliberations. Some states promulgated detailed curriculum requirements—including specific courses and units to be completed by undergraduates, especially community college students.

Thus, the reform movement has already resulted in eroding the faculty's traditional prerogative to formulate the undergraduate curriculum. Faculty will confront this potential reduction in responsibility for academic affairs in a variety of arenas. Curriculum designs that affect the terms and conditions of employment are, for example, the proper concern of faculty bargaining.

- *Reassessing faculty reward systems.* Reformers argue that a shift of college and university priorities toward research and away from teaching has reinforced narrow specialization on the undergraduate level:

> *There is a constant tension between teaching and research throughout higher education. . .Institutions may demand productivity in the form of teaching, or of research, or both. They may require the one and reward the other, thereby sending double messages to faculty. Despite frequent assertions that undergraduate education is an important mission, it often occupies last place in the competition for faculty time and effort.*[44]

Some reformers recommend changes in faculty assignments and reward systems. Several reports observe that junior faculty or research assistants often teach lower division courses, and recommend the regular assignment of senior fac-

ulty to teach such courses. The critics assert that *all* faculty should teach undergraduates. They also argue that, "Unless the reward system in higher education measures teaching performance as well as research, all efforts to improve college teaching will be to no avail."[45] Many reports recommend that, "College officials directly responsible for faculty personnel decisions should increase the weight given to teaching in the processes of hiring and determining retention, tenure, promotion, and compensation, and should improve means of assessing teaching effectiveness."[46]

The critics recommend that experienced middle- and senior-rank professors teach fewer courses that are structured around their current research interests. Instead, they should devote relatively more time to courses that are relevant to undergraduate general education. In sum, the reformers believe that:

- a movement toward a more general and less specialized curriculum is desirable, and
- a shift in faculty rewards and assignments—toward undergraduate teaching, away from research—is needed.

These recommendations raise two other issues. First, if teaching competence is weighed more heavily in faculty evaluations, assessment means and measures must be widely accepted as fair and reliable. Student evaluations are now commonly employed in reviews of teaching effectiveness, but they are rarely considered sufficient. And peer observation is usually frowned on as intrusive and open to personal bias. Faculty, not college administrators or state-level agencies, must formulate solutions to these issues.

Second, institutions that emphasize and reward teaching may encourage faculty to devote more of their energies to teaching than to research and publication. Faculty members who take this path, however, could impair their "marketability" at other institutions. These institutions would evaluate the professional competence of candidates for faculty positions largely on the basis of their research record. Many faculty would be reluctant to so constrain their career mobility. Thus, external incentives to concentrate on research could clash with institutional reward systems that promote teaching effectiveness. It is therefore desirable for faculty and administrators together at each institution to find an appropriate balance of rewards for *both* research and teaching.

- *Ensuring adequate support for faculty.* Calls for reform in undergraduate education emphasize curricular change and increased attention to teaching proficiency. These objectives require substantial investments of faculty time and energy.

Faculty development programs are now in place at colleges and universities. They are intended to provide support or assistance to faculty to improve instructional skills, develop or improve curriculum, conduct research, and maintain personal and professional vitality in the face of increasingly heavy work loads. At many institutions, however, these programs do not have a permanent status with reliable funding. Moreover, at most institutions, support for released time or travel grants, or for workshops, conferences, or consultations with teaching specialists is usually inadequate for large-scale changes. Significant curriculum reform is not possible unless faculty development is given a high priority.

Faculty who redesign the curriculum and course of study need adequate released time, access to colleagues and materials at other institutions, and clerical support. Faculty who wish to improve their instructional effectiveness may need expert advice, access to information about teaching methods, and opportunities to observe others. Many faculty members may need help—including collegial support—to cope with the added stress that may result from meeting demands for change.

Faculty members have much at stake in ensuring that adequate resources and assistance are available. They must involve themselves from the outset in the development, planning, and implementation of faculty development and support programs. Faculty senates and bargaining agents must insure that faculty development programs improve and support faculty, rather than identify and eliminate some of them.

Conclusion

Let us summarize our key conclusions:

- Faculty should insist on a primary role in curricular reform.
- Faculty and NEA state associations should resist government attempts to dictate curriculum.
- Faculty should work to see that good teaching is encouraged, recognized, and rewarded.
- Faculty should insist that adequate instructional resources and released time be made available to support curriculum reform.
- Faculty should be willing to work with their colleagues to achieve curricular consensus. They should protect courses that promote social understanding and permit an appropriate level of experimentation.
- Faculty should be eternally vigilant in protecting the academic freedom of their colleagues.
- Faculty organizations, including senates and collective bargaining agents, should monitor procedures used to enact curricular reform to ensure the protection of faculty prerogatives.

For most of this century, faculty members have defined the aims and content of the undergraduate curriculum. The reform movement has helped call attention to curricular issues that were neglected at a time when faculties contended with a myriad of other problems. But, there is now a danger that other constituencies will make curricular determinations. Faculty members must assert their predominance in this area: a predominance that requires subject mastery and intellectual achievement not to be found in administrators or state-level staff or boards. They must stay ahead of the reformers by identifying and incorporating new intellectual developments and pedagogical techniques that will enrich the undergraduate curriculum. They must also continue to insist that the undergraduate curriculum accommodate the cultural and ethnic diversity of students and faculty.

Faculty members usually work enthusiastically on curricular issues. But they are often diverted by having to respond to administrative and state attempts to limit their autonomy. Administrations and state officials should encourage the faculty role as principal curricular innovators. This encouragement

should include making available resources and material rewards. The principal difference between many reformers and most faculty is that of outlook: as opposed to most of the reformers discussed here, faculty members view the undergraduate curriculum as an opportunity—not a problem. And, with extensive attention focused on the curriculum, the opportunities for innovation have never been greater.

Appendix 1: Components of the Undergraduate Curriculum

The modern undergraduate curriculum has three broad components familiar to virtually every college and university student: general education, the major, and electives. As part of general education, most institutions require their students to demonstrate college-level learning skills. They provide review or remedial courses for students whose skills are shaky. But most general education requirements consists of so-called "breadth" or "distribution" courses. These courses are designed to ensure that all students gain some knowledge of the ideas and culture of their civilization and heritage.[47]

The general education curriculum is supposed to:

- build basic skills for advanced studies and lifelong learning;
- expose students to the mainstreams of thought and interpretation: humanities, science, social science, and the arts; and
- integrate learning in ways that cultivate broad understanding and the ability to think about complex subjects.

In practice, general education requirements usually follow one of three formats:

- A core curriculum in which each student takes the same set of prescribed courses;
- Distribution requirements designed to ensure that each student takes a minimum number of courses or credits in specified academic areas. Prescribed distribution requirements include combinations of specific courses, student course options from short preselected lists, and a limited number of electives in designated areas. Some minimally prescribed distribution requirements include few, if any, specified courses. The emphasis is on areas that must be studied;
- Free electives (no required program).

The *major* (or "concentration") represents the depth component of the undergraduate curriculum. Students specialize in one subject or a group of subjects, usually within one academic department, but often including courses (major "cognates") in other departments. The major is designed to provide students with a body of knowledge and methods of study in a particular subject or subject area. It may prepare students for further education or a career, or may be pursued out of intrinsic interest in the subject area, with no advanced education or career goals in mind.

Students who satisfy their institution's general education and major requirements usually meet remaining unit requirements for graduation by enrolling in *electives:* courses of their choosing. Electives provide students with opportunities to sample courses that might not be part of the general education distribution requirements, acquire learning skills that might not be taught in required courses, develop broader intellectual interests or talents, and satisfy their curiosity about unfamiliar subjects.

Appendix 2: The NEA Policy Statement on Curricular Reform

This statement was drafted in 1987 by a seven-member advisory group appointed by NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell and chaired by Professor James M. Davenport, Washtenaw (Michigan) Community College. The NEA Executive Committee approved the statement as an elaboration of existing policy.

The NEA Advisory Group to the Executive Committee on Reform in Higher Education believes that the current efforts at curricular reform which involve changes in the shape and nature of the baccalaureate degree must incorporate standards of excellence and new skills, knowledge, and understandings to help prepare students for the future. No effort at reform can succeed without adequate support for the faculty who have primary responsibility for the curriculum, nor can it succeed unless it addresses the needs of a diverse student population.

In the past two years, more than 80 percent of American colleges have engaged in some form of curriculum revision. In the debate over undergraduate education, conflicting goals have emerged. Some, like mastery of basic skills, active participation in the learning process, in-depth study, critical thinking, understanding of a discipline's characteristic methods, and a coherent course of study, are consistent with NEA principles. Others, masked in a concern for traditional academic values, are in opposition to basic NEA principles of faculty control, equal access to quality education for all students, and multicultural understanding.

Many recent official discussions of the curriculum date its decline to the educational ferment of the 1960s and 1970s, that is, to the moment when women, Afro-Americans, Native Americans, and others began analyzing the traditional curriculum and demanding the incorporation of their perspectives and experience into the dominant version of knowledge. Any effort at curriculum reform now must accept the positive results of that ferment-a reinvigoration of scholarship and an opening up of the academy to new kinds of students who realities forced a new comprehension of the arts and sciences. Tradition-a common body of intellectual reference-must be balanced by innovation.

Given these considerations, the Advisory Group asks the Executive Committee to recommend the following list of items for adoption as NEA policy:

1. The curriculum must express the goals and mission of individual institutions, addressing the needs of its students and the particular strengths of its faculty.
2. In designing the college curriculum the faculty should take the responsibility to ensure that it is suited to the needs of a multiethnic, multicultural society.
3. Periodic review of the curriculum should take place within institutions under the guidance of faculty representing various disciplines after consultation with students, staff, and administration.
4. Teaching and development of undergraduate curriculum are a major part of the faculty's role. Those faculty involved should be adequately rewarded for these activities.
5. General education courses, which are part of the core curriculum, must not be relegated to exploited junior and/or part-time faculty, or to graduate students.
6. Major curriculum revisions at colleges and universities should involve consultation with faculty members at other educational institutions affected by the changes.
7. Any undergraduate curriculum should be flexible enough to allow access for different kinds of students (adult learners, students who must work, part-time students, transfers, and other non-traditional students).

SOURCE: "Curriculum Reform." *NEA Higher Education Advocate* 4 (January 30, 1987), 9-10.

For Further Reading

In the late 1970s, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching published a three volume series that still serves as a valuable history and clear overview of the curriculum. Much of the voluminous literature on the American undergraduate curriculum consists of specialized monographs. More than two dozen reports criticizing undergraduate education have been published since 1982. The most influential reports are the AAC, Bennett, Bloom, Boyer, Cheyney, Hirsch, and NIE studies. In late 1988, the American Council of Learned Societies published a major response to these reports insofar as they concerned the humanities. Below: a summary of key volumes:

A. The Carnegie Foundation "Trilogy" on the Curriculum.

- Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, *Missions of the College Curriculum* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1977).

This book provides an overview of current curriculum practices, a discussion of external and institutional influences on the curriculum, and a perspective on the major curriculum issues of the 1970s. Contemporary readers will find these issues familiar. Criticisms and suggestions for change are interspersed with descriptive material on the components of the curriculum. The book concludes with chapters on educating students for the world of work, the role of values-oriented education, and a discussion of how curriculum change can be implemented.

- Levine, Arthur, *A Handbook on Undergraduate Curriculum* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1978).

The *Handbook* is designed as a basic reference and sourcebook on the undergraduate curriculum. Part One, "The Undergraduate Curriculum Today," addresses key elements of the curriculum: general education, the major, basic and advanced skills and knowledge, tests and grades, education and work, advising, credits and degrees, methods and instruction, and the structure of academic time.

Part Two, "A Comparative and Historical Perspective," reviews philosophies of higher education and proposals for curriculum change, summarizes important curriculum approaches and events of the past, provides a brief international perspective, and discusses how curriculum change occurs.

- Rudolph, Frederick. *Curriculum: A History of the American Undergraduate Course of Study Since 1636.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1977.

This book is a narrative history of the American undergraduate curriculum from its colonial beginnings to the mid-1970s. Rudolph notes that "there is no way to make a history of the American college and university curriculum read like an account of the winning of the West or the collapse of the Old South." Yet he comes closer than one might expect. Rudolph packs his long essay with acerbic observations and amusing anecdotes. The result is an informative and insightful historical overview. It is an excellent companion to the other works in the Carnegie Foundation series.

B. The Reform Reports.

- Association of American Colleges. *Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community. The Findings and Recommendations of the Project Redefining the Meaning and Purpose of Baccalaureate Degrees* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges, 1985).

Integrity focuses on redefining the fundamental meaning and purpose of baccalaureate degrees, and suggests ways to overcome some of the identified weaknesses of American undergraduate education. The report suggests that institutional leaders should "revise the responsibility of the faculty *as a whole* for the curriculum *as a whole*" and that curriculum committees should be "vehicles of institutional integrity and purpose."

The report recommends that institutions develop a required curriculum that includes nine essential elements, one of which is study in depth. The emphasis, however, is on *learning how to learn*. The minimum curriculum would be required of all students, including those studying in professional fields.

- Bennett, William J., *To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: The National Endowment for the Humanities, 1984).

Based on the findings of a Study Group on the State of Learning in the Humanities in Higher Education, the report contains four main sections: 1) Why study the humanities? 2) How should the humanities be taught and learned? 3) How well are the humanities taught and learned on the nation's campuses? and 4) The challenge to academic leadership.

A main premise of *Legacy* is that the study of the humanities and Western civilization must become the heart of the

curriculum in American higher education. The Study Group thought this especially important because "the humanities can contribute to an informed sense of community by enabling us to learn about and become participants in a common culture, shareholders in our civilization."

- Bloom, Allan, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuister, 1987).

Bloom argues that "openness used to be the virtue that permitted us to seek the good by using reason. It now means accepting everything and denying reason's power." The openness to be found in most American college students results in a "relativism" that opposes the quest for truth. Bloom questions the ability of most students to make astute judgments and discriminations. He cites various aspects of the student culture as evidence of this contention.

Bloom also takes the university to task for its direct involvement in the affairs of the world. This involvement compromises the ability of scholars to seek truth. Bloom argues that a liberal arts curriculum based on important texts is the best antidote to the ills he describes.

- Boyer, Ernest L., *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America* (New York: Harper and Row, for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1987).

Boyer and Carnegie Foundation staff visited twenty-nine public and private campuses that reflect a wide spectrum of baccalaureate education. Foundation staff also collected and analyzed data, and reviewed previous research. The study described the current situation, identified strengths and problem areas, and provided suggestions for improvement.

Boyer recommends that the first undergraduate requirement should be proficiency in the written and spoken word. He also suggests that colleges develop a curriculum that encompasses an *integrated core* of general education. The curriculum would include seven areas of inquiry, and an *enriched major*, or study in depth. All aspects of college life, including the curriculum, would "contribute to both personal empowerment and social perspective."

- Cheney, Lynne, *Humanities in America* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Humanities, 1988).

Cheney, chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, contends that, at a time of heightened public interest in the humanities, academic inquiry is increasingly arcane. Practitioners are more concerned with their research, and less concerned with undergraduate teaching. Worse, human-

ities scholars politicize the curriculum: the Great Tradition is out; the Third World is in. Many observers, notes Cheney, "have written of disarray and isolation, of rupture and distrust, [and] of a lost sense of meaning in the academic humanities."

Cheney holds faculty members responsible for these shortcomings. "Examining the higher education spectrum," she writes, "one sees a clear pattern: as teaching responsibilities decrease, faculty salaries increase."

- Hirsch, E.D., *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

Hirsch argues that literacy involves not only mastery of the techniques of reading, but also knowing about the culture in which an author writes. A "culturally literate" American "has a knowledge of shared, taken-for-granted information that is neither set down on the page nor explicitly stated in oral communications. It provides the necessary frame of reference by which literate people understand the content of their reading."

Hirsch contends that the chief cause for the decline in cultural literacy is the use of "skills-oriented," "relevant" materials in the elementary and secondary schools. He provides an appendix that contains his list of "What Literate Americans Must Know."

- National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Education. *Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education. Final Report of the Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, 1984).

Involvement focuses on ways to improve student involvement in the educational process, establish high expectations for educational outcomes, and improve assessment and feedback.

With respect to curriculum, the report recommends that institutions develop and publicize a statement of the knowledge, capacities, and skills they expect graduates to exhibit; examine and adjust the content and delivery of the curriculum to match these expectations; and require all baccalaureate degree students to complete at least two years of liberal education. It also recommends the expansion of liberal education requirements to integrate knowledge from various disciplines, and to develop capacities of analysis, problem solving, and communication.

C. A Response

- American Council of Learned Societies. *Speaking for the Humanities* (New York: ACLS, 1988).

Speaking for the Humanities is largely a rejoinder to Lynne Cheney's *Humanities in America*. Where Cheney berates the humanities for failing to speak unequivocally for universal Western values, the ACLS authors attribute the questioning of these values to America's changing position in the world economy and the emergence of non-Western powers on the world scene. The ACLS report redefines Cheney's "failings" as "enlivening transformations." Questions about the canon, the structure of language, the organization of knowledge, and the hierarchies that dominate political and intellectual life are a sign of health: "It could not have been easy to sit at Socrates' feet."

Noting the increase in specialization and professionalization, the ACLS report contends that significant generalizations arise only from specialized, particularized research. No one condones *trivial* research, but it is difficult to know in advance what research will have the most significant implications. The report calls for cross-disciplinary inquiry and communication to counteract narrowness.

The positivist ideal of objectivity and disinterest, the ACLS paper notes, is vulnerable to criticism. Indeed, "the consensus of most dominant theories is that all thought does, indeed, develop from particular standpoints, perspectives, interests." Traditional claims to disinterest, the ACLS points out, reflect unacknowledged ideologies. The best humanistic thinking calls attention to ideology's capacity to promote "as universal values those that in fact belong to one nation, one social class, one sect."

Speaking for the Humanities views the current debate over methodology—and the resultant intellectual uncertainty—as a strength, not a weakness. The desperate need to return to the old verities, the report charges, is the real "failure of nerve." Attacks on the curricular "canon," the report adds, do not arise from relativism. These attacks arise from attempts to grapple with the genuinely difficult questions of pluralism, values, and otherness. The ACLS authors propose that the curricular debate be presented to students, to help them understand these issues.

The report attributes enrollment declines in the humanities not to internal problems, but to an explosion of interest in business and economics that occurred at a time of declining economic expectations.

NOTES

[1] "Curriculum Reform." *NEA Higher Education Advocate* 4 (January 30, 1987), 9-10.

[2] J.B. Lon Hefferlin, *Dynamics of Academic Reform* (San Franicsco: Jossey-Bass, 1969), quoted in Frederick Rudolph, *Curriculum: A History of the American Undergraduate Course of Study Since 1636* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1977), 5.

[3] See, for example, Lyman W. Porter and Lawrence E. McKibbin, *Management Education and Development: Drift or Thrust into the 21st Century?* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1988); Association of American Colleges, *Unfinished Design: The Humanities and Social Sciences in Undergraduate Engineering Education* (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges, 1988); Joan S. Stark and Malcolm A. Lowther, *Strengthening the Ties that Bind: Integrating Undergraduate Liberal and Professional Study* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1988), and Peter T. Marsh, ed., *Contesting the Boundaries of Liberal and Professional Education: The Syracuse Experiment* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1988).

[4] See Arthur M. Cohen and Florence B. Brawer, *The Collegiate Function of Community Colleges: Fostering Higher Learning Thought Curriculum and Student Transfer* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1987), and Richard C. Richardson and Louis Bender, *Fostering Minority Access and Achievement in Higher Education* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1988).

[5] T. N. Bonner, "The Unintended Revolution." *Change* (September-October, 1986), 44-51. See also David O. Levine, *The American College and the Culture of Aspiration 1915-1940* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986).

[6] See President's Commission on Higher Education, *Higher Education for American Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1948).

[7] Howard R. Bowen, *The State of the Nation and the Agenda for Higher Education* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1982).

[8] Arthur Levine, "Deja Vu." *Change* (January/February, 1986), 50-52.

[9] Criticisms of the undergraduate curriculum did not emerge full blown in the 1980s. Serious concerns had been voiced at least a decade earlier, when a Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching study charged that the general education component of the curriculum was a "disaster area" that had been losing ground for more than 100 years." The study also criticized the major as often "too narrow and single-minded," and decried the growth of electives (characterized as sometimes "subject to aimless choices"), which accounted for one-third of the average course of study, up from one-fourth in the late 1960s. See Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, *Missions of the College Curriculum* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1977).

[10] National Institute of Education, *Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: 1984).

[11] Frank Newman. *Higher Education and the American Resurgence* (Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1985). Ernest L. Boyer. *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America* (New York: Harper and Row, for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1987).

[12] Association of American Colleges. *Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community* (Washington, D.C.: 1985). See also Association of American Colleges. *A New Vitality in General Education* (Washington, D.C.: 1988).

[13] William J. Bennett. *To Reclaim a Legacy: A report on the Humanities in Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Humanities, 1984).

[14] Terrel H. Bell. *To Secure the Blessings of Liberty.* A Report of the National Commission on the Role and Future of State Colleges and Universities (Washington, D.C.: American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 1986).

[15] Allan Bloom. *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987). E.D. Hirsch, Jr., *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), and E.D. Hirsch, Jr. et al., *Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1988). See also Carol Schneider's review of Bloom in *Thought and Action* 4 (Fall, 1988), 115-122.

[16] Association of American Colleges. *Integrity in the College Curriculum.*

[17] William J. Bennett. *To Reclaim a Legacy.*

[18] Association of American Colleges. *Integrity in the College Curriculum.*

[19] Ernest L. Boyer. *College.*

[20] Association of American Colleges. *Integrity in the College Curriculum.*

[21] Howard R. Bowen. *The State of the Nation. . .*

[22] Association of American Colleges. *Integrity in the College Curriculum.*

[23] Howard R. Bowen. *The State of the Nation. . .*

[24] Jack H. Schuster and Howard R. Bowen. "The Faculty at Risk." *Change* (September/October, 1985), 13-21.

[25] Ernest L. Boyer. *College.*

[26] Frederick Rudolph. *Curriculum.*

[27] Association of American Colleges. *Integrity in the College Curriculum.*

[28] Frederick Rudolph. *Curriculum.*

[29] National Institute of Education. *Involvement in Learning.*

[30] Association of American Colleges. *Integrity in the College Curriculum.*

[31] Frank Newman. *Higher Education and the American Resurgence.*

[32] Lawrence Veysey. "Stability and Change in the American College Curriculum" in Carl Kaysen, ed., *Content and Context* (New York, Macmillan, 1972).

[33] American Council on Education. *Campus Trends, 1984* (Washington, D.C. 1984.)

[34] "College: Raising a New Vision," *Change* (November/December, 1986), 10-17.

[35] Elaine El-Khawas, ed., *Campus Trends, 1988* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1986), 11.

[36] Carol M. Boyer and Aims C. McGuinness, Jr., "State Initiatives to Improve Undergraduate Education: ECS Survey Highlights," *AAHE Bulletin* (February, 1986), 3-8.

[37] "Commentary: Jonathan Z. Smith on William Bennett's *To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education*," *American Journal of Education* (August, 1985), 541-546.

[38] P.Z. Zingg, "The Demographic Challenge and the Search for Curricular Consensus: Undergraduate Education at the Major Research University," *The Journal of General Education*, 36(3) (1984), 167-181.

[39] J. Trimbur, "To Reclaim a Legacy: Cultural Literacy and the Discourse of Crisis," *Liberal Education*, 72:2 (Summer, 1986), 109-119. This review of the Bennett report is a careful assessment of that report's central thesis. It and similar essays state that the reformers overemphasize the traditional liberal education curriculum. Trimbur argues that Bennett's (and by implication, other) calls for a re-emphasis of liberal education reflects a crisis of legitimacy, in which the moral authority of cultural tradition has lost its power to command automatic loyalty, and must be reasserted. "What formerly could be taken for granted," he writes, "has now fallen into the arena of decision making...where reasons must be given and arguments made."

But "it is simply no longer possible," argues Trimbur, "to assume that there is a single self-evident canon of humanistic thought and texts that can be restored at the heart of the curriculum." He views Bennett's reaction to the cultural pluralism that emerged from the sixties as another manifestation of the back-to-basic movement, a "frankly political" agenda designed to "reassert the authority...of the Western tradition." Thus, Bennett's reform recommendations are viewed as profoundly conservative, a "call for a return to a fictive past [as] part of a wider... movement to...keep the subversions and the pluralism of the sixties under surveillance, and to clear the ground for a restoration of the traditional values, beliefs, and practices of the West."

[40] N.O. Keohane, "Our Mission Should Not Be Merely to 'Reclaim' a Legacy of Scholarship—We Must Expand on It," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 32 (April 2, 1986), 88.

[41] National Institute of Education, *Involvement in Learning*.

[42] Ernest L. Boyer, *College*.

[43] Association of American Colleges, *Integrity in the College Curriculum*.

[44] Education Commission of the States, *Transforming the State Role in Undergraduate Education: Time for a Different View* (Denver, CO: No. PS-86-3, July, 1986).

[45] Association of American Colleges, *Integrity in the College Curriculum*.

[46] National Institute of Education, *Involvement in Learning*.

[47] Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, *Missions of the College Curriculum* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1977).

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